

Spring 1998 LXI



D Adams

Rachel Barlage

Alan Brinker

Denise Butkus

Bob Dusek

Virginia Evans

Bradley Gellert

John Groppe

Heather Hagan

Paula Hilton

Kathy Jarowicz

Judy Kanne

Charles Martin

Heather Moser

Mike Nichols

Ryan Pelsy

Lisa Phillips

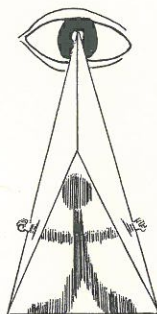
Chrissy Scafide

Gayle Smith

Anne Trotta

Randy Wagers

Heidi M. Wenk



Measure

Saint Joseph's College
Rensselaer, Indiana
Volume LXI

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Measure
1997

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poems by
Heidi M. Wenk



Homecoming

Heidi M. Wenk

A crisp, alive feeling
hums inside the walls.
Invisible flowers
leave their distinct fragrance,
and the smell of the drinks
in their red cups
surround their shimmering
satin bodies —
A regular party
about to begin.

Everyone is beautiful tonight —
almost everyone.
As I stand beside her,
admiring her,
and silently criticizing myself,
I say nothing,
but let the words and colors
and curls push me farther down
into the world
that I know so well.

Once again,
I am distant and out of place.
I can see it in their eyes,
and in their actions.

They know
and fear
that I don't belong
in a shimmering satin dress
with a red glass at my lips.

They know what I think of them.

A Princess with Two Princes

Heidi M. Wenk

Tonight I met someone that won't leave my mind.
He lingers through my castle
Just making himself at home.
Doesn't he know that there is a prince
Who lives with this princess?
I should have known to lock the castle doors.

Loneliness

Heidi M. Wenk

Loneliness--
as subtle as my heartbeat
I ignored all this time.
Even knowing it was there
I didn't listen
as I fell away.
Now, I've landed
after a hundred stories
and many miles
a slow and softly aching descend
helpless to do anything.
And here locked away
in my corner of the world —
a world I don't belong in
while all the others
out nurturing themselves with others
have forgotten me.
I am alone once more.
Even the sun has left me.
As the darkness of storms creep in,
storms stir in my soul also.
Tonight,
I dread the hours to come
spent in solitude.
Like feeling the greatest urge to sing
when your mouth is taped shut.
I long for a smiling face
and eyes to look at me
with love.
This is loneliness.

Betrayed

Heidi M. Wenk

Little girl,
why do you aspire such things
unfit for you?
Don't you know
you're a girl?
Don't give me that look,
or you'll get it!

I wish they would have told me that
having strength of the body
fashions gods, and
empty heads and dirty mouths
run the world,
for I would not have made the trip.
To be female is to suffer
to be feminine, to be weak
in a world too harsh for my tiny fragile body
and tender heart.
As if hard shelled bodies
and red eye are all the good
we can produce.

Give me room to step,
and as I do,
you condemn me to your efficient hand
and your angered words.
Why not collar me?

Such trash flying from your mouth—
What am I to say—
To agree with your ignorant babble?
I'll buy the gun and the bullets,
but you must pull the trigger,
for I am too weak to do it myself.

The Final Acclaim

Heidi M. Wenk

At night
they come
with their shameless quest
determined to conquer
to ruin, destroy
yet they are dim in the darkness
in their white hoods
just barely visible
I could have heard them
the shuffling of their clean feet
on our land
I could have sensed their intrusion
the fear of every black southerner
the final acclaim
pounding their hateful symbols
with their dirty hands
into our earth
a blaze of anger
appears from the darkness
If only I were awake
I would have been
just in time to see
ghosts
vanishing, growing smaller
yet with each act
they grow
and step into the spotlight
with their facade of smiles
leaders in the public eye
but leaving us beaten and burned
in the background...
screams break the night

pulled from the depths
of my sleep
I smell the mark they have left
there isn't much time
my heart pounding
fumbling for the door
screaming to my husband
as I near the room
the illuminated outline
of the door
screams fill my head
terror grabbles at me
determined
I try to enter
but the flames engulf me
another attempt
forcing myself to go on
I see her
lying there
her tiny body engrossed in
the red scorching arms
of the devil
I know
I can't get to her in time
I can't go on
still I persist
my lungs violated
vision blurred and eyes burning
but my efforts fail once more
his arms attack me also
the sound of my husband yelling
is distant and meaningless

I can't give in
the floating object crowd my vision
I stagger
still continuing
it closes in on me...

white walls
I think
white...
his brown face painted with the
sorrow of a million
Negroes
stares at me
I know
and
the tears begin to stream
down my face.

Drudgery

Charles Martin

Blinding sights to blind the feeble eyes,
Dreams to fill the weary minds.
(but thoughts can be deceiving)

I'm sorry for making you waste my time, but
I had no control. None.
A slow July night, creepy with subtle clues
brought me to my nervous knees.
(but now I can stand again)

I'll never give up
trying to see eye to eye.
You keep trying to understand that I will never
Break my promises.
Realize that you are too smart to tell me that
everything I said was true.
It won't work
(I forgive you)

I suddenly feel like a different person when
you ask me that question, the one
I had no choice but to answer.
(you deserve the truth)

The dusky dawn brings a new perspective
on how you pull me around.
A new day.
A diversion to teach me that I am helpless.
(sorry, but true...)

The clear blue sky of twilight holds my hand,
but it grasps you also.
Give me the strength to walk away.
(I'll walk slowly)

What have you done
My little one?
Seeking this lofty goal.

Watercolor

Judy Kanne

The paints
are
in
the cubby holes
waiting for the brush to swirl
through
or grab
pigment from
each
to
fill the
brush just right.
The brush
dips
into the pools of paint
and
sweeps
the paper
in time to let
this color
and
that color

settle upon the
right
white paper
bleeding
with water
here
and fixing tightly there
where
no water lies.
No magic happens
until
the painter,
the paintbrush,
the paint
come together
with paper and water
to make
the white paper
disappear
into
a
picture.



Please Don't Go

Lisa Phillips

"Where were you last night?" she asked, as she watched him get ready to leave in the hall mirror, trying to ignore her swollen cheek.

"I had to work. You bought that new dress."

"You haven't seen the dress. You're too busy working," she said quietly, as the anger filled her.

"I've seen the receipt. That's enough," he scowled. "Why do you buy those things?"

"To keep you from working late," she answered, her voice cracking, nervously fingered her bruises.

"I don't know why you buy that stuff. It's pointless," he told her, his voice gaining in force, "It's not like it's going to help."

"What isn't going to help?" She put her hand on his, stopping him from turning the door knob.

"Why do you always start this? Other men's wives don't behave this way. Why can't you just understand?" He pushed her hand away and turned the knob.

"When will you be back?" She put her hand on his shoulder, standing between him and the door.

"A couple of weeks."

"But...."

"But what?!?"

"Please don't go," she begged, pulling him gently away from the door.

"Quit it," he said firmly, drawing his hand back as if to strike her. She flinched, feeling, once again, every blow he had ever dealt her.

"I quit," she whispered as he walked out the door. *

poems by
Heather Moser



Tuesday

Heather Moser

She was feeling infinite that day,
and nothing was unlikely.
It was the kind of morning when you wake up and think,
"I should write a screenplay today. Or run for mayor."
The sky was plenty crisp,
dry leaves shattered beneath her feet,
birds serenaded,
and the only thing missing was a steaming cup of cider.
She relished the walk and kept her head down as she strode,
not because she was defeated,
but because the road looked exactly like the road at her house;
it had the same white gravel embedded in the same flat black tar
and the same grooves from tire tracks in the middle of the road
because that's where you drive in the country, in the middle of
the road; you're less likely to hit mailboxes that way, or dogs
sniffing in the ditches,
and her thoughts rambled on even worse than this sentence.
Still she roamed, well past her original destination,
because she was fairly certain that there was still some
unexplored terrain out there. And if there wasn't, so what?
There was always a different road heading north instead of east;
there was always an infinite amount of Tuesdays.



Wednesday

Heather Moser

Today was the day he had to decide if he was going to leave her.
This was absolutely the day.

Inaction was action,
since staying from uncertainty was staying nonetheless
and wasn't all that different from staying out of love.
If only she'd do something horrible, say steal his car
and sell it, or seduce his roommate.

Then at least he'd be forced into leaving this indecisive,
ambivalent purgatory.

Then at least he'd be material for a sad sad sad teenage sonnet
containing the prerequisite references to dark clouds raining
on his heart and the deep deep deep abyss that is his life.

Or maybe near-tragedy could strike in their lives:
she nearly falls out a window but he saves her,
or he nearly chokes on a Pizza Hut mint but she remembers
the Heimlich maneuver from Girl Scouts.

Then they'd fall back in love and inspire an ornate,
impassioned love poem with singing birds and rainbows,
sunny skies, and the ever-necessary laughing children
that make their happy happy happy hearts dance
like prancing fawns or something equally inane;
sappiness doesn't disturb the delirious.

At least then he'd feel something,
something other than the knowledge that today is the day
he absolutely has to make a decision about something
he doesn't care about either way.

All he wanted was an emotion worth writing about.

Thursday

Heather Moser

As I recall, Thursday was the day the neighbor's cat
jumped out of the tree, straight into the wading pool,
resulting in general mayhem
and the sudden uneven dispersal of sunburned kids
who may or may not have peed in the water from fright.
Either way, it marked the end of my baby-sitting career,
what with five wailing Johnson kids reeling around
a three-yard radius
and the littlest one still whimpering,
"Big cat in the sky," an hour later.



My Sunshine

Heather Hagan

The first time I heard the song "You Are My Sunshine" I was five years old and my mom was teaching me how to play it on the piano. After I had learned the song, I used to sing it for my grandparents' neighbor, Sally. She paid me a quarter for each performance.

Over the years Sally became much more than a neighbor. My aunt had married her son, and although we weren't related by blood, I still felt as though I were part of her family. When my aunt and uncle had a daughter, I always looked forward to her birthday parties because I knew that Sally would be there.

"You're so pretty," she would say admiringly. "And so smart. I can't wait to see you when you're all grown up."

A few years later Sally was diagnosed with cancer. On the surface, she didn't change at all, so it was easy not to think about her illness. She had never looked her age and still seemed as vibrant as ever.

No one really spoke of her illness and we all pretended as though everything was normal. That Christmas, when I was 16 years old, everything was the same as always with my aunt and uncle shuttling back and forth between their respective families. Everyone asked about Sally.

"How's your mom doing, Tim?" they would ask my uncle.

"She's doing O.K.," he would reply confidently. "The doctors say that the chemo is going well and she should be done with it soon."

The next year his reply to the same question lacked the confidence of a year ago.

"She says she doesn't feel that bad," my uncle would say, attempting to find something positive to say so as not to dampen the mood.

One day my mom came from work looking more exhausted than usual. We sat down at the dinner table and she informed us that my aunt had called her at work that day with some news.

"Sally has been taken to the hospital," she announced wearily. "They don't think she has much longer."

During Sally's hospitalization, I visited her often. We would talk and listen to music, or sometimes just sit in silence and watch people go by the window. Still we acted as though she were perfectly fine and this was just a minor setback. I didn't know how to talk to someone about her impending death, so I didn't even try.

For Spring Break that year I went to Disney World with my best friend Amy. It had been a hard year for me and a vacation at "the happiest place on Earth" was a welcome getaway. When I called home one night my mom told me of Sally's worsening condition. Without my mom having to say it, I know that Sally would not be there when I got home. I would have to say goodbye, but I wanted to do it in a way that would lift her spirits rather than bring them down.

I went to the store that night and bought a blank tape. On it, I recorded myself singing "You Are My Sunshine." My voice had changed a lot over the years, but I knew that the effect would be the same. I carefully wrapped the tape and mailed it to Sally that night.

At the funeral the next week, after everyone else had gone, my uncle approached me.

"Mom wanted you to have this," he said, reaching into his pocket. He pulled out a quarter and placed it in my hand. *

[Untitled]

Chrissy Scafide

The subtle darkness of the room made me feel trapped. It was so small yet filled with so much confusion. Glowing shadows created by the black light drifted in and out and some just lingered around me. Everyone was laughing and carrying on but it didn't seem real; it's like my body was participating but my mind was drifting above me quietly observing. I remained helpless on one side of the room, knowing well that all of my answers were trapped on the other side. Terrible obstacles kept pushing me farther and farther back into a corner. I pretended to smile but inside I was filled with rage. He was only two steps away but I was entangled in so much confusion that it seemed like miles. My chest was pounding faster now and there was nothing I could do to stop it. I desperately wanted to float above those obstacles surrounding me and enter into the place that would make me safe. Instead I was trapped behind a wall. A wall of friends and unfortunate circumstances.

Sweet Memories

Denise Butkus

I wanted to tell you I loved you,
There was so much I wanted to say,
If only you hadn't left me so soon.
If there would've been one more day.
I wish I could see your beautiful smile
Or that look upon your face.
Oh, how I would love just to touch your hand
And hold onto your sweet embrace.
And now that you're gone, all the time has passed.
There are things left unsaid and undone
But forever remains the memories in my heart
Of our laughter, our love, and our fun.
My life will go on, but I will not forget
For I can't bring back the past.
I'll love you forever with all of my heart.
Our sweet memories will last.

—Dedicated to my dear friend Elizabeth

A Sense of Justice

Bradley Gellert

Freedom.

Exhilaration under the gossamer wings,
Soar to anxious heights.

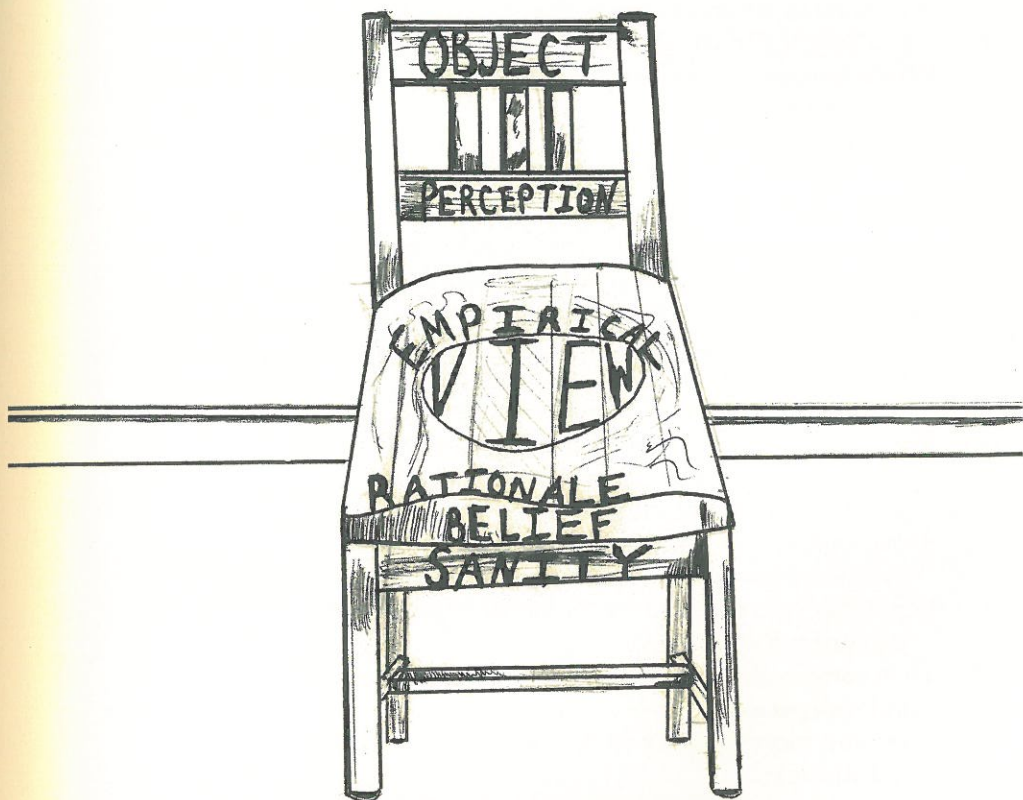
Passion for life,
envy of man,
delicate, beautiful, **BOLD**

Fragile body torn asunder
Transparent glass;
lively image shattered.

It's sticky hot
on blacktop
at 105 degrees.

Final, broken flutter
before screeching rubber smears her
across the pavement.

Justice has been served.



Innocence + Life

Alan Brinker

A lifetime of ice cream cones, baseball cards,
and Tart N' Tinies ago lies my innocence.
Was it so innocent and easy as I see it now?
Summertimes of baseball,
Autumn comes, school out for the day and the neighborhood
boys play football and basketball,
Atari in winter.
In spring, school let out, the pool would open,
And we'd splish splash our thoughts away.
Pop music was cool, and girls had cooties
(But they were still cute).
A few good friends were all we needed
to jump in leaves and sled down hills and
Ride bikes and hike through muddy woods.
Were they really the best friends ever?
or does memory do that?
Soon, high school came, and innocence crept away.
Girls were kissed (and more!) and friends changed.
Pop music left, replaced by the Beatles and Doors,
And our minds opened.
Then came college and more friends (really the best)
and independence.
Beer (and more!), the Dead, Matthews, Phish,
and Kerouac.
Late night talks of God and maniacal stuff,
Who knows what?
There were girls, and so many sunrises seen through bloodshot
eyes.

When I looked up, looked into myself,
The innocence was gone, except for the memories.

She Turns Away

Alan Brinker

She walks away, down the hallway—
The longest hallway.
A wisp of smoke from a scented candle
Floating away in the dark,
Towards the ceiling.

I look away, turn back,
She glances my way.
Lightning forks as a key turns,
Fits the lock of a door.
She disappears as the thunder crashes,
And my heart echoes the empty boom.

poems by
Virginia Evans



Please Announce

Virginia Evans
Class of 1997

You didn't hear me
when I spoke kind,
afraid to raise my voice
didn't want to raise attention.

Didn't listen when I tried
to reason
to see your side
I thought you were more important.

Didn't notice
when I went
out of my way
so I wouldn't get in
yours.

Now, you stand
surprised
because I found my
voice
and
screamed.

Missing

Virginia Evans
Class of 1997

lost herself sometime
last year
somewhere
around Indiana and Michigan
holding her heart
in her hands
love on her face
naiveté in her eyes
she's disappeared

Have you seen her?

Lady

*Virginia Evans
Class of 1997*

I've watched you
fixing,
coordinating,
colors with candles,
candles with chairs,
always busy
"fixing up the house."

I've listened
to how unhappy you are
with him.
He makes you laugh
sometimes
but making you laugh
isn't
making you happy.

And I watch
as you busy yourself
"fixing up the house,"
to forget
breaking down the marriage.

Destructor

Virginia Evans

Class of 1997

Did you enjoy
crashing it through popsicle stick fortresses
drowning it in your bath water
throwing it from the top of Lego castles?
Did you enjoy
breaking me?

54 Pages of Crumpled Paper on the Floor

Virginia Evans

Class of 1997

Poems swirl in head
concrete wall
no dynamite

On the Inside

Anne Trotta

I've got a soul like a worn coffee table,
So many scars, edges worn by time.
Kicked and thrown, pounded and slammed
It has made me, shaped me into this...
The same but changed — marked.
My grain has been altered,
Yet, this is only lying on the surface,
There are still cracks that go unnoticed —
Splits in my strength that run straight to my core.
You can polish the surface...
Come on, try to make it pretty again.
Only know that you cannot touch
The wounds that lie deeper still...
Not without destroying, tearing apart,
Starting from the base yet again.
And, honey... life's too short for that.

My Piano

Anne Trotta

I straddle the bench
in a haphazard manner.
One foot out, toes delicately poised
on the pedal.
My fingers spread on the end
of out-stretched arms.
Mingling with the keys —
black and white.
I stare beyond the book before me
into the heart of this instrument.
Heavy top raised by slender pole,
to let my soul escape.
I can see its inner workings
of coiled metal and wooden slabs.
And my eyes return to the paper,
a virtual chaos of wild scratchings.
Beauty created through
the translation of ink into motion.
In swift, calculated movement,
my body moves in sync
with the sound resonating
from the shiny black box.

The Combine

Paula Hilton

Looking out from the edge of the crowded cornfield,
the hypnotic trances of dry, swaying stalks ends abruptly.
It emerges — enormous, green, yellow, bladed; thrashing and snatch-
ing its prey.

Like Moses parting its field;
those chosen into a bin,
the un-saved chewed and cast out.

The man in the cab looks out peaceful, while below
the earth is torn apart.

Calm returns to the empty field.

The Ghost of Molly Pringle

Ryan Pelsy

Molly Pringle, it was said,
lay naked in a parson's bed.
The gossip spread through Christendom.
Something wicked this way comes.
"'Tis not my fault!" the parson cried,
"th' slut's a witch," the scoundrel lied,
"and to her spell I did succumb!"
Something wicked this way comes.
Judges, elders, all agreed,
"a guilty verdict do we need."
Falsely tried and falsely hung,
something wicked this way comes.
The parson, then, alone in bed,
had fearsome visions in his head.
Too late to mend, the deed was done,
something wicked this way comes.
Now listen children, heed my tale,
'bout a young girl locked in jail.
Rising on the scaffold steps,
a dreadful curse spat from her lips:
"I'll have your life!" the lass did swear,
standing on the scaffold stair,
"I'll have your God-damned life!" swore she,
"ere the full moon rise, you'll see!"
A few days passed, they found him dead,
Just as Molly Pringle said.
Witnesses whom all respect,
Had said a scarf was 'round his neck.
But none could say where it came from,
something wicked this way comes.

Gervae

D Adams

Scotty was four years old
when he found his mother
hanging in the garage.
He thought she was
a Halloween decoration
swinging back and forth
above his father's work bench,
limp like a sad rag doll
in her blue flower print dress.

Boredom

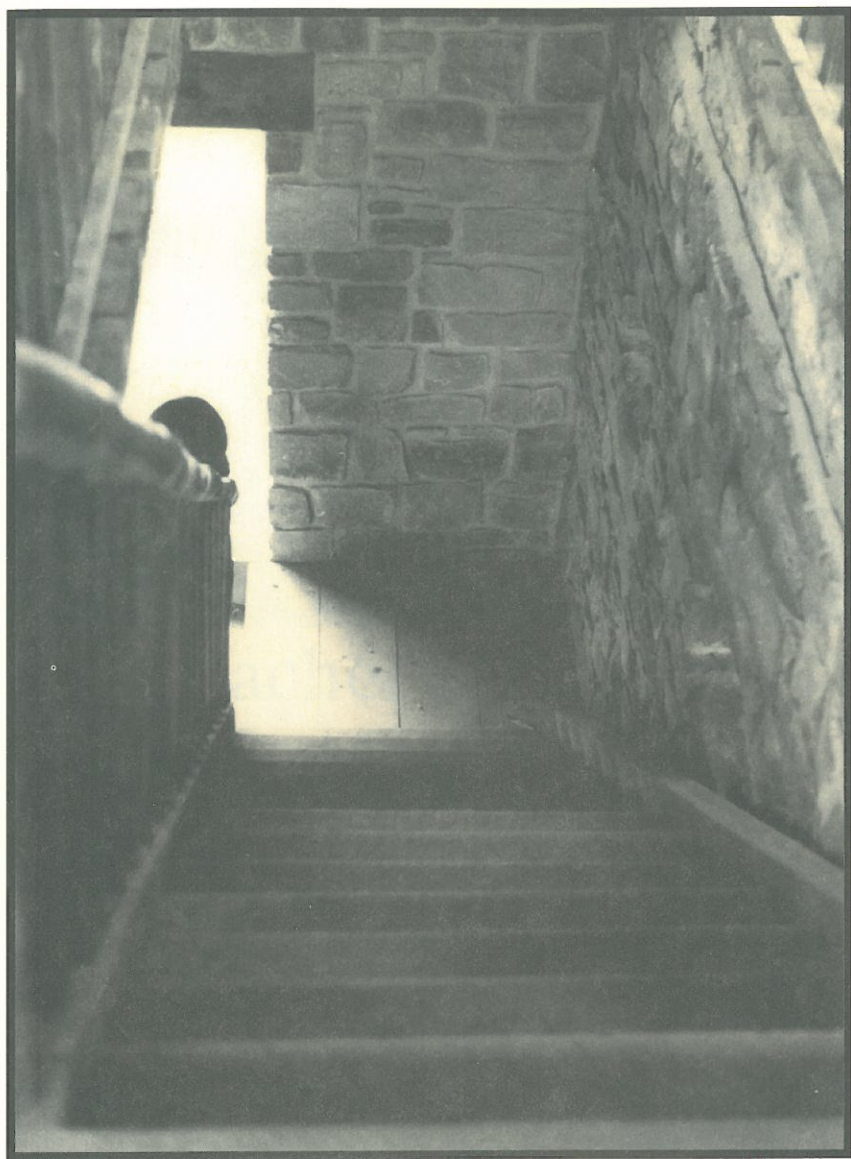
D Adams

I talked to a
Colorado bush bum
about boredom
and he said his days were ruled by it.
It was like a bushfire
too far gone that controlled his life.
Boredom ran in his family
just like his mom's hairdo.
All she did was vacuum the living room
in perfect rows
like when she mowed her lawn.
She can't be that bored
if she found something
so lovely to do with her shag.

The Death of Father Horstman

John Groppe

When Father Horstman died, two years retired,
no one cried. White vested, we priests gathered
to save the appearances of order
and repose, though some did shake with age
and the gravity of their own deaths.
Father Horstman's obedience was praised
as were his jokes, but his death broke the spell
of necessary, holy submission.
Not one eulogized joke could restore it.
Horst had not fallen, though the coroner
said so. Horst had finally chosen
an ironic freedom, laughing, without
submission, at necessity,
dis-easing us in our autonomy.
We clung to the pew backs to firm ourselves.
Uncertain of our places, roles and lines,
we came deferent to some mute rule.
Unlike us, Horst's brother and sister
moved, shuffling, down the aisle with ritual gifts,
attentive to some vision older than priesthood,
more powerful than ritual,
kinder than choirs,
regretting only that obedience
had died before their brother.



works by
Rachel Barlage



Letting Go

Rachel Barlage

Sitting next to you,
your hand on my knee,
I sip water, watch you
gulp your coffee.

The ceiling fan spins above;
Billie Holliday's soul swells
around us. We are alone here,
except for the man behind the counter,
hunched over a newspaper, hand
cradled around a thick white mug.

We came here to talk,
but we sit in an uneasy silence
that I know I cannot fill.
What can I say that will
stop you from loving her,
that will make you stay?

Last night, lying in your arms,
I pulled you close, held you so tight
that you laughed at me. You said
you loved me, but I knew
that soon I would be alone
again, with only the memory
of your smell in the night.

White

Rachel Barlage

A bright beam of morning sunlight
illuminates tiny dust particles in the air,
touches the white sheets
in a brilliant globe of warmth.

Our feet, exposed at the end of the bed,
look more naked in this light
than our bodies did in the darkness.
His toes glowing sensually in the pure,
white light contrast sharply with the chipped
layers of glaring red polish on my nails.

His face is peaceful, childlike in sleep,
and I lean over to feel the warm breath
whisper from his slightly parted lips.
I touch a soft brown curl on his chest,
and he rolls over in his sleep.

I hold my breath, hoping he will not awaken.
I long to trace his back with my fingertips,
kiss his shoulders, feel his heartbeat.
I want to whisper "I love you"
so only I can hear.



Laughing

Rachel Barlage

She walked through the living room straightening pillows and piling stray books next to the couch. She opened the curtains, and as she turned, she saw her reflection in the window. Her hair was pulled into a sloppy ponytail, and blonde ringlets framed her face. She was surprised to see that she was smiling. She picked up empty glasses from the coffee table and scratched something sticky from the wood surface with her fingernail. As she stepped around an armchair, she looked down at her leg. She studied its white smoothness, the tiny red bumps on her knees, blonde hairs that shown just below her denim shorts.

Walking toward the kitchen, she watched her legs move up, bend at the knee, move down. She watched her feet as they moved one after another on the beige carpet. The fragile bones that reached from her long toes to her ankle, the tiny blue rivers of blood that forked just below the skin. Walking toward the kitchen, her bare feet moved over a hard, crusty spot on the carpet where she had spilled a glass of Sprite and hadn't bothered to clean it up. Her feet hit the cool linoleum in the kitchen, and she stood still for a

moment, listening to the hum of the refrigerator.

Placing glasses in the stainless steel sink, she heard a musical clink as glass hit metal. She picked up the glasses and put them back down, enjoying the sound. Unable to stop moving, to stand still, she lifted the plastic bottle of Dawn and dripped some into one of the glasses, seeing as if for the first time the thin silver circle on her smallest finger, the delicate white scar just below her index finger. She turned on the water and breathed in deeply, feeling a cool breeze pass through the window above the sink and brush over her hot cheeks.

As her fingers moved over the glass, washing and re-washing, she heard again and again the squeal of the tires, felt the steering wheel fight beneath her clenched fingers, saw the blue car turn in front of her, four crucial feet from her headlights. She knew that if she had not had her brakes fixed last week or if the driver in the other car had turned a few seconds later, she would probably be dead now. Hands shaking, she felt a soapy glass slip from her fingers. Heard it shatter in the sink.

Without looking down, she reached into the sink to pick up the pieces and blinked tears from her eyes as she dug a large shard of glass into her hand. A sharp pain shot up her arm, and she heard herself cry aloud. Cherishing the pain, feeling alive with it, she took several gulps of air and pushed her outspread palm into the glass, grinding it into her skin. She looked down at the sink, saw deep red spots on the metal, a stream of blood running down the drain, and began to laugh. *

Longing

Rachel Barlage

Breathless, alone, aching
with fear that my loneliness
is not temporary, that horoscopes
promising love and sex
will never be fulfilled,
that the wish I make will never reach
a star, I quiver with longing,
stare at the bars of the top bunk
as I lie in bed, painfully awake
in the darkness.

Remember

Randy Wagers

I sit in my room with paranoia all alone,
listening to the wind whistle outside the window
By myself at night, thoughts get deep.

They make me twist in my covers and fight sleep.
I don't know who I am, or what I see.
It seems different in the mirror every time,
is it me?

I wonder if she remembers the way we used to be,
or if it took her more than a week to get over me.

Sometimes another day feels like another battle,
But still I climb further up the ladder
hoping I don't fall to make the glass shatter.
But I ain't trippin' about these shades of grey
Because I know that soon I'll wake to better days.

Approach

Bob Dusek

Wild imagination
of things unknown
seeking wisdom and the knowledge of
things past.

Wild concentration
figuring things out
seeking wisdom and the knowledge of
things past.

An extravagant human emerges.

Learning to be
before you express it
before you indefinitely act.

Wild discovery
wisdom and the knowledge of
things past.

All there...
concerned most of the time
worried the rest
living always.

\$19.99

Bob Dusek

Here goes,
another day... another dollar.

We need to pick up the pace.
No toleration for the poor—
the drinkers, the lovers,
the living, the down, the out...
the late,

the confused, somehow
caught up in another world.

No, it ain't your world.
But who's to say that YOU,
that you're as good in their world
as you are in your own,

running, forgetting—
caught up in life,
just like "they" are,

forgetting our purpose,
society's purpose,
the reason you have a job,
the reason that company exists.

"It's for humans...!"

We ain't for it, that's for sure.
It came of us, for us
to help us,
to help them, everyone,

the down, the out, the poor,
the confused—the lost.

We can't leave them, now—
now that we've used their blood,
their history, their ancestors—
to get where we are.

Rolling down the highway,
in your comfy car—
you see a thumb sticking up
alongside the road,
begging—just by being there
for a ride....

Do you stop?

Break The Mold

Kathy Jarowicz

Be different
Be unique
Be yourself
Don't follow others
 follow your heart and soul.
Be free to make your own decisions
 don't let others dictate them to you.
Dare to be different
 who cares what others say,
 for everyone is weird, strange or different
 in some way.
Don't follow anyone's footsteps,
 make your own.
Be what you want
 not what others want you to be.
But more important break the mold and
 Be Yourself!



Beyond Belief

Mike Nichols

Gabe was a friend of mine, but only loosely because he was popular in high school. I wasn't, and we all know how that works. I tried not to take it personally; we were both subject to a massive social system that came into existence long before we were born and will continue long after we're dead. Despite all of that, I still enjoyed watching Gabe play football. He could tear his way down the field faster than I could even believe, flashing his eyes so quickly, finding holes in the defense only he could detect. He could jump high enough to make me believe no human ever could or ever would jump higher. In his uniform and helmet he reminded me of a medieval warrior, of a knight on a sacred quest. At the end of every game he'd leap into the air and grab hold of the goalpost, seeming to believe that he could touch the dark night sky and beaming stars above.

I believed he could too.

After not seeing Gabe in years I ran into him the other day. He was dressed in tatters: holey jeans, a shirt with cigarette and ash burns on it, and a baseball cap that was more threads than hat. It was a far-cry from his shiny, pristine uniform. His flashing eyes seemed to have holes in them bigger even than the ones he'd run through on those long gone games under the blazing stadium lights. I didn't really say much to him. I just listened to all the problems he'd had. I guess the stars hadn't been as close as either of us had thought.

"...and now I can't find another job," he muttered. "Can you believe that?"

"No," I said. "I can't believe it." *

End the Game, Papa

Mike Nichols

Kids made too much noise.
Especially in groups.
That what the boys in the
swimming pool are doing:
playing and making noise.
I used to play like that.
But I'm an adult now.

Their father's watching.
He's watching them splash each
other and jump in the water,
sending tiny fragments of the pool
onto the deck. "Look at me,
Papa!" they yell. And he watches
them.

I watch them too,
wishing they wouldn't be so wild,
wishing they would just shut up.
One of the boys is squinting to see.
He must usually wear glasses.
I'm an adult now.
I can figure things like that out.

"God!" one boy yelps.
"Don't say 'God,'" another giggles,
as if it's a joke.
God isn't a joke.
But his creations happen to be.
I happen to be.
And what does that say about God?

I'm an adult now.
I can think like that.
But I shouldn't jump in the pool.
I shouldn't splash water around.
It wouldn't feel right.
It wouldn't be right.
I'm an adult now.

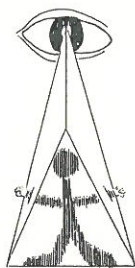
"All right, boys," the father says,
"Out of the pool."
That's it, Papa. End the game
Make them feel as lifeless as I do.
I don't want to look at
who I used to be anymore.

Always and Forever

Mike Nichols

Come dance with me, Devil.
I need a partner and even
though you've always frightened me,
to say I truly hate darkness
would be a lie.
But aren't falsehoods
what You love the most?
Lucifer, the brightest angel,
Your plight was always so romantic.
The fall from grace
to prowl the world
for the ruin of souls.
How chilling.
How exhilarating.
If we dance,
will I fall with you?
It could be I already have,
failing others and myself.
Left with nothing beside me.
Except you.
Always and forever.
Indifferent to my joys,
gleeful of my sins.
I've always made you too happy.
Always and forever.

works by
Gayle Smith



Sleep

Gayle Smith

Oh sweet dream-filled sleep,
to me an elusive stranger.
Due to the lack of you I giggle, then weep,
my mental health in danger.

Oh revitalizing, rejuvenating respite,
as from a refreshing cup, from you I'd drink.
For your healing tonic I am truly desperate,
as I long for the land of Nod and Wink.

Oh precious, glorious slumber,
you for granted I will never take,
and perhaps soon your hours will be great in number,
if I can only survive until spring break.

Wildflowers

Gayle Smith

You sway and bob beside the well paved road,
not intending to call attention to yourself

but

I catch your fragrance in the warm wind,
and it turns my straight forward, determined head

and then

I see powdered butterflies of various hue
dip, flutter and vie zealously, jealously for your attention

so I

Kneel next to you and scatter the lovely harem,
and consume you with all of my senses.

But no

I know

you belong to the butterflies.

Hugs

Gayle Smith

Almost everyone enjoys giving or receiving a hug — if it is the right type, that is. It is my experience that there are three distinct types of hugs. I am sure that the reader has either given, or has been the recipient of what I call the “obligatory” or “class reunion” type of hug. This hug is an insincere, yet mutual hug, given to or received from persons whom we have never met, and probably never will hug again. It can often be seen given at the receiving line of a wedding, or at class reunions, as its name suggests. It is executed quickly and stiffly, with each hugger grasping the other’s shoulders, their faces turned in opposite directions. There is often concern about smeared lipstick, crushed corsages and mussed hair before giving or receiving this hug.

I will call the second type of hug the “one sided hug.” This one is more sincere than the obligatory, at least on the part of the hugger. The hugee, however, is an unwilling participant. The recipient of this embrace stands with his arms pinned to his sides, while being smothered by the well-meaning hugger. Its duration is always too lengthy as far as the hugee is concerned. Small, cute children often suffer from this type at the hands (or should I say arms?) of well-meaning adults. Individuals who have had “one too many” at a party and infrequent bathers are notorious for giving “one-siders.”

I have saved the best type of hug for last. I call it the “fusion” hug. In this hug, both parties are willing participants. I may be used to express sympathy, joy, excitement, comfort or passion, but it is always spontaneous, and always sincere. During this embrace, the huggers’ bodies melt together, exchanging body heat willingly and unashamedly. Many times the participants bury their faces into one another’s neck or chest. This type of hug is often accompanied by an excited jumping, gentle caressing or soothing rocking motion. The duration of this embrace varies widely, but the lucky participants usually wish it could last forever.